Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 – 36 (cancelled)

37. (currently amended) A method of coating an optically readable data carrier, including the step of:

applying a transparent adhesive film to a data carrier surface that is to be protected, wherein said adhesive film is ~~provided with~~ adhesive on ~~one~~ a first side, which is to be applied to said data carrier surface, and is non-adhesive on a second side, which is opposite said first side, and wherein said second side forms a transparent protective layer.

38. (original) A method according to claim 37, which includes the step of withdrawing said adhesive film from a carrier film during or after application of said adhesive film to said data carrier surface.

39. (original) A method according to claim 37, which includes the step of withdrawing a protective film from said adhesive film prior to application of said adhesive film to said data carrier surface.

40. (original) A method according to claim 37, wherein a shape and size of said adhesive film corresponds to said data carrier surface.

41. (original) A method according to claim 40, wherein sections of said adhesive film that correspond to a shape and size of said data carrier surface are punched onto a carrier film.

42. (original) A method according to claim 37, wherein said adhesive film is applied to said data carrier surface in a centered manner.

43. (original) A method according to claim 42, wherein said adhesive film and said data carrier surface are aligned with one another prior to said applying step.

44. (original) A method according to claim 37, wherein during said applying step said adhesive film is pressed against said data carrier surface via a rotating pressure roller.

45. (original) A method according to claim 44, which includes the step of controlling a pressure of said pressure roller.

46. (original) A method according to claim 44, wherein prior to being pressed by said pressure roller, said adhesive film is held at a pre-specified angle relative to said data carrier surface.

47. (original) A method according to claim 44, wherein said pressure roller and said data carrier surface are moved relative to one another.

48. (original) A method according to claim 47, wherein said data carrier surface is moved linearly past said pressure roller.

49. (original) A method according to claim 47, wherein said pressure roller is rotated synchronously to a relative movement of said data carrier surface.

50. (original) A method according to claim 37, wherein said adhesive film is a layer of adhesive material without carrier material.

51. (original) A method according to claim 50, wherein said adhesive film is hardened via at least one of pressure, time, UV radiation and thermal treatment.

52. (currently amended) A method according to claim 37, wherein ~~a~~ said transparent protective layer~~, especially~~ is a PC tape~~, is applied to a~~ provided on said non-adhesive second side of said adhesive film.

53. (original) A method according to claim 37, wherein said adhesive film is an adhesive film that responds to pressure, and wherein the adhesion characteristics of said adhesive film vary as a function of pressure.

54. (withdrawn-currently amended) An apparatus for coating an optically readable data carrier, comprising:

a laminating station for applying a transparent adhesive film to a data carrier surface that is to be protected, wherein said adhesive film is ~~provided with~~ adhesive on ~~one~~ a first side, which is to be applied to said data carrier surface, and is non-adhesive on a second side, which is opposite said first side, and wherein said second side forms a transparent protective layer.

55. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, wherein a shape and size of said adhesive film correspond to said data carrier surface.

56. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, wherein sections of said adhesive film that correspond to a shape and size of said data carrier surface are punched onto a carrier film.

57. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, wherein said laminating station is provided with an aligning unit for aligning said adhesive film with said data carrier surface.

58. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, wherein said laminating station is provided with a rotatable pressure roller.

59. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 58, wherein said laminating station is provided with a device for moving at least one of said pressure roller and said data carrier surface.

60. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 59, wherein said device is provided with at least one linear movement unit for said data carrier surface.

61. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, which includes a device for withdrawing a protective film from said adhesive film.

62. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, wherein said adhesive film is provided with a protective layer, especially a PC tape, on a non-adhesive side thereof.

63. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, which includes a device for hardening said adhesive film.

64. (withdrawn) An apparatus according to claim 54, wherein said device for hardening said adhesive film is provided with an irradiation unit or a thermal treatment unit.

65. (withdrawn-currently amended) An optically readable data carrier comprising:

a transparent protective layer in the form of an adhesive film that is ~~provided with an~~ adhesive on ~~one~~ a first side, which is applied to a data carrier surface, and is non-adhesive on a second side, which is opposite said first side.

66. (withdrawn) A data carrier according to claim 65, wherein said adhesive film is a layer of adhesive material without carrier material.

67. (withdrawn) A data carrier according to claim 65, wherein a protective layer, especially a PC tape, is provided on a non-adhesive side of said adhesive film.

68. (withdrawn) A data carrier according to claim 65, wherein said adhesive film can be hardened.

69. (withdrawn) A data carrier according to claim 65, which includes a protective housing, and wherein said data carrier is disposed in said protective housing.